



Holy and Great Thursday

On the evening of this day, which was the eve of the feast of unleavened bread (that is, the Passover), our Redeemer supped with His twelve disciples in the city. He blessed the bread and the wine, and gave us the Mystery of the Divine Eucharist. He washed the feet of the disciples as an example of humility. He said openly that one of them was about to betray Him, and He pointed out the betrayer by revealing that it was he “that dippeth his hand with me in the dish.” And after Judas had straightway gone forth, Jesus gave the disciples His final and sublime instructions, which are contained in the Gospel Reading of the Holy Passion (John 13:31-18:1, known as the Gospel of the New Testament). After this the God-man went forth to the Mount of Olives, and there He began to be sorrowful and in anguish. He went off alone, and bending the knees He prayed fervently. From His great anguish, His sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground. As soon as He had completed that anguished prayer, lo, Judas came with a multitude of soldiers and a great crowd; on greeting the Teacher guilefully with a kiss, he betrayed Him.

The Lord Jesus was then apprehended and taken prisoner to the high priests Annas and Caiaphas. The disciples were scattered, but Peter, who was more fervent than the others, followed Him even into the court of the high priest, but in the end denied thrice that he was His disciple.

Then our divine Teacher was brought before the lawless Sanhedrin and was interrogated concerning His disciples and His teaching. The high priest adjured Him before God that He tell them whether He was truly the Christ. And having spoken the truth, He was judged guilty of death, supposedly as one who had blasphemed. Then they spat in his face, beat Him, smote Him with the palms of their hands, and mocked Him in every way, throughout the whole night until the morning.

Troparion. Plagal of Fourth Tone

WHEN the glorious disciples were enlightened at the washing of the feet, then Judas the ungodly one was stricken and darkened with the love of silver. And unto the lawless judges did he deliver Thee, the righteous Judge. O thou lover of money, behold thou him that for the sake thereof did hang himself; flee from that insatiable soul that dared such things against the Master. O Thou Who art good unto all, Lord, glory be to Thee.

Kontakion. Second Tone

TAKING the Bread into his hands, the betrayer stretcheth them forth secretly and receiveth the price of Him that, with His own hands, fashioned man. And Judas, the servant and deceiver, remained incorrigible.

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† THE AGONY IN GETHSEMANE